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Daisy Seekers

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The Dairy-Seekers

by

W. M. L. Jay

Illustrated

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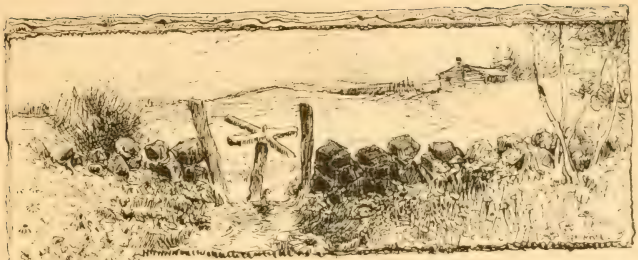
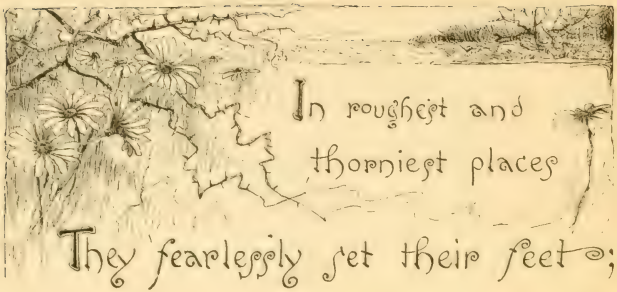
The Daisy-Seekers



"Go!" said the King to his servants,
"Gather me daisies white,—
Gather them out of the sunshine,
Out of the gloom of night.
No pathway so long and dreary,
No dwelling so small and poor,
But they follow with steps unweary,
They cluster beside the door



They fearlessly set their feet;

They lift up their mild, white faces

Close to the dusty street;

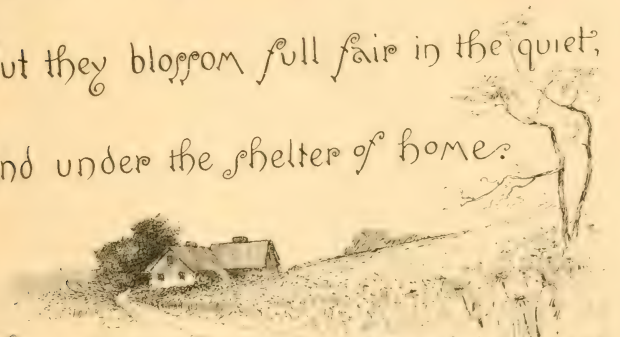
They steal o'er the edge of the desert,

They spring from the loneliest grave;

Mid the thunder and carnage of battle

Their banners of peace they wave.

You will find them wherever you seek them,
As far as you choose to roam,
But they blossom full fair in the quiet,
And under the shelter of home.



The proud ones may scoff at their praises,
The careless may pass them by
But the cheerful and steadfast daisies
Are the very delight of my eye.

And he that shall bring me the whitest
Shall sit at my feast to-night,
In a crown of jewels the brightest,
And in raiment of purest white.

He shall thrill to
the song and the story
That echo through mansions above;
He shall bask in the shine of my glory,
And drink of the wine of my love.

One moment the servants stood musing,
In wonder or doubt or delight,—
Then each by the way of his choosing,
They went for the daisies white.
Some bore with them vessels olden,
Some, baskets of willow strands,

These, vases
all jeweled and golden,
Those, nought but two willing hands;

And on the steep slopes of the highlands

By the river's unresting lapse—

In the silence

of wave-imprisoned islands—

Through the sunshiny woodland gaps—

Mid the jarring and clangor of labor

Mid the booming and flashing of strife—

Where neighbor looked coldly on neighbor

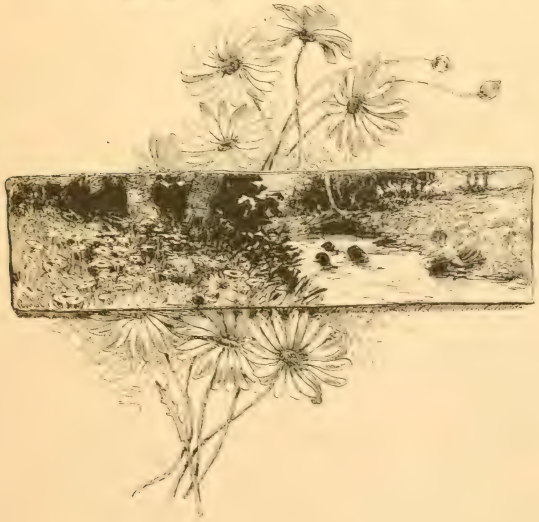
Where love was the sweet law of life—

Where duty inflexibly bound them

In bowers most still and most fair,—

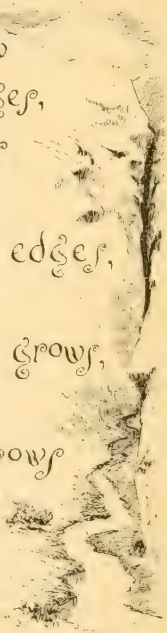
Wherever they sought them they found them,

For the daisies grow everywhere!



Some gathered with carols of gladness,
Some mused on the words of the King,
Some trembled with doubt or with sadness,
While others went wandering
Far over the gardens of pleasure,
Where the red rose, blushing bright
And the tulips show treasure
Dazzled and charmed their sight;
And they crowded their baskets and vases
With scarlet and purple and red
Unheeding the lovelier graces
Of the daisies under their tread.

Or they climbed to the narrow
ledges,
Between the eternal snows
And the sheer cliff's dizzy edges,
Where the queenly rhodora grows,
And they crowned their brows
with its brightness,
And pressed their lips to its glow,
While the daisies in star-like whiteness,
Were left on the green slopes below.



But a boy on a couch that was lying,
With two small crutches at hand,
Looked long from the window, sighing,
After the vanishing band.
And watching them joyously climbing
To the hilltop's breezy height,
Or hearing their voices far chiming,
When drooping boughs hid them from sight,

He murmured:-"And so am I ever
Left lonely and empty behind!
Shut in from all lofty endeavor,
While others may seek and may find!
Oh, for the hills and the mountains,
Where the freshest breezes go!
Oh, for the brooks

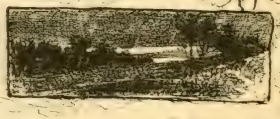
and the fountains-
All spots where the daisies grow!

Copeland

Oh, with the birds to be roaming,

With the chamois to climb and to spring!

Oh, to come back



in the gloaming

Bearing white spoils to the King!

Ah, why does he leave me so lonely,

With a heart for his service so fain,

But with feet that can carry me only

To the neighboring Valley of Pain?"

Then lo! came a hush and a brightness
As from rifted clouds in spring,
And the sudden, shimmering whiteness
Of a passing angel's wing,
And a voice like the silvery pealing
Of bells o'er a twilight sea,
Sore hearts and sorrowful healing
With a promise of joy to be; —

"Take courage, the King hath one measure
For the service of feet that run,
And of feet that wait his pleasure,
Till all his deep will is done.
And though daisies are lovely and many
On far-away hilltop and plain,
Yet as bright and as white ones as any
Grow down in the Valley of Pain."

Then slowly, white sunset was painting
Its wonderful pictures in light,
The cripple, half-hoping, half-fainting,
Went seeking the daisies white;
And into the one little crock left
By his vanishing comrades at morn,
He gathered them out of the rock-cleft,
He gathered them out of the thorn.

n barren and desolate places
They grew the more star-like and mild,
And he gazed in their sweet, brave faces,
Soft-smiling, nor knew that he smiled!
Or he wet them with tears fast falling,
Nor saw how it washed them white,
Till the King's voice, suddenly calling,
Rang out through the valley's night-

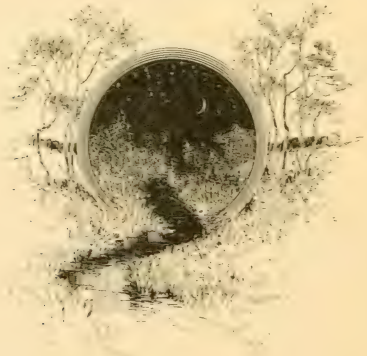
"Come quickly,

for all things are ready

To welcome my weary ones home;

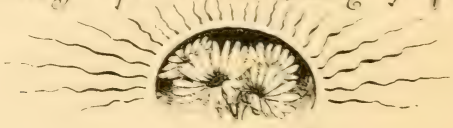
The night shades grow sombre and steady,

And I wait for the daisies – come!"



And they came! From the glen and the forest-
From the great city's hurry and moil-
From the field where the conflict was fiercest-
From the brown, fertile furrows of toil-
From islands dew-jeweled that slumbered-
From sands that were scorched as with flame-
An army whom no man hath numbered,
Close rank upon rank they came-
Came bearing their baskets and vases
With a rhythmic tread and swing!-
And they heaped up their harvest of daisies
High at the feet of the King.

The daisies so winsome in splendor!
The daisies so steadfastly bright!
Kin to earth by a stem so slender,
To the stars by coronas so white!
Made perfect by touches so many
Of varying sunshine and rain!-
But the whitest and brightest of any
Were those from the Valley of Pain.



So the King sent his swift, still angel,
And we robed our pale cripple in white;
And out through the dusk of the evening
He went from our lingering sight—
We know not what pathway of brightness,
What silvery ladder of stars,
He climbed to the luminous whiteness
Of the pearly and wide-open bars.
We but know in some heavenly azure,
That needeth no sun for light,
In the court of the King's high pleasure,
He sits at the feast to-night.

And sweet are the song
and the story
Of dwellers in mansions above.
And sweet is the King's wide glory,
And sweetest
the wine of his love.

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